



Yesterday's dinner, tomorrow's weather, today's news? US newspaper coverage of food system contributions to climate change

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Abstract:

BACKGROUND: There is strong evidence that what we eat and how it is produced affects climate change. **OBJECTIVE:** The present paper examines coverage of food system contributions to climate change in top US newspapers. **DESIGN:** Using a sample of sixteen leading US newspapers from September 2005 to January 2008, two coders identified 'food and climate change' and 'climate change' articles based on specified criteria. Analyses examined variation across time and newspaper, the level of content relevant to food systems' contributions to climate change, and how such content was framed. **RESULTS:** There were 4582 'climate change' articles in these newspapers during this period. Of these, 2.4% mentioned food or agriculture contributions, with 0.4% coded as substantially focused on the issue and 0.5% mentioning food animal contributions. The level of content on food contributions to climate change increased across time. Articles initially addressed the issue primarily in individual terms, expanding to address business and government responsibility more in later articles. **CONCLUSIONS:** US newspaper coverage of food systems' effects on climate change during the study period increased, but still did not reflect the increasingly solid evidence of the importance of these effects. Increased coverage may lead to responses by individuals, industry and government. Based on co-benefits with nutritional public health messages and climate change's food security threats, the public health nutrition community has an important role to play in elaborating and disseminating information about food and climate change for the US media.

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Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker, Public

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Unspecified Exposure

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

United States

Health Co-Benefit/Co-Harm (Adaption/Mitigation):

specification of beneficial or harmful impacts to health resulting from efforts to reduce or cope with greenhouse gases

A focus of content

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

General Health Impact

Intervention:

strategy to prepare for or reduce the impact of climate change on health

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Mitigation

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified